



Conflict Management Styles

People tend to use one of four conflict styles. A fifth style, compromising, describes a state be used temporarily to get someone to move from one of the other styles.

Identifying or clarifying your current style is important when evaluating your current work-life interactions. It may help clear why some relationships are working while others are not. At all times, you have choices about how you act and interact.

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument Is often used as the tool to uncover your conflict management style. You can find a free and very quick online assessment here:

<http://academic.engr.arizona.edu/vjohnson/ConflictManagementQuestionnaire/ConflictManagementQuestionnaire.asp>

Brief Descriptions of the Five Conflict Management Styles

Collaborating Style: Problems are solved in ways in which an optimum result is provided for all involved. Both sides get what they want and negative feelings are minimized.

Pros: Creates mutual trust; maintains positive relationships; builds commitments.

Cons: Time consuming; energy consuming.

Competing Style: Authoritarian approach.

Pros: Goal oriented; quick.

Cons: May breed hostility.

Avoiding Style: The non-confrontational approach.

Pros: Does not escalate conflict; postpones difficulty.

Cons: Unaddressed problems; unresolved problems.

Harmonizing Style: Giving in to maintain relationships.

Pros: Minimizes injury when we are out matched; relationships are maintained.

Cons: Breeds resentment; exploits the weak.

Compromising Style: The middle ground approach.

Pros: Useful in complex issues without simple solutions; all parties are equal in power.

Cons: No one is ever really satisfied; less than optimal solutions get implemented

